



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick
Press Release**

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**GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES STEPS TO
PRESERVE SNAP BENEFITS FOR 163,000
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSEHOLDS**

Cross Agency Initiative Will Restore SNAP Cuts Included in Federal Farm Bill

BOSTON – Tuesday, March 18, 2014 – Governor Deval Patrick today announced steps to preserve Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for approximately 163,000 households in Massachusetts and avoid the loss of approximately \$142 million in SNAP benefits set to be cut under the recently enacted federal Farm Bill.

"Government's role is to help people help themselves, and these steps are necessary to help our most vulnerable residents and families meet their most basic needs," said Governor Patrick.

Under the plan, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) will partner with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide at least \$20 in heating assistance to eligible families through the H-EAT program, which makes them eligible for an increase of \$80 in monthly SNAP benefits to help families pay for food. DHCD will invest approximately \$3 million to support the continuation of the program and leverage the additional SNAP benefits for these families.

The investment will also help maintain economic stability for families and businesses in Massachusetts, as each SNAP dollar spent generates approximately \$2 in economic activity for the state, according to the USDA.

"Reversing the cuts from the Farm Bill is a major step in helping Massachusetts families work toward economic stability," said Secretary of Health and Human Services John Polanowicz. "Any cut in benefit, no matter the size, has a real impact on low-income families, and this funding supports a program that makes a difference every day."

"This program continues to be a valuable resource for residents across the Commonwealth," said Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development. "As the Administrator of the LIHEAP program, DHCD is pleased to join our sister agency in preventing cuts to the food stamp benefits that our neediest families have been receiving."

The heating assistance, known as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, is federal assistance provided to the state to help low-income families defray heating costs.

"I'm so proud of Governor Patrick and his Administration for stepping up and providing these resources to help some of our most vulnerable neighbors," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "Despite what Speaker Boehner said last week (ironically, on the same day he invited Pope Francis to address a joint session of Congress), this effort is not 'fraud' or 'cheating' -- it's an effort by states like Massachusetts to provide food to hungry families."

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps) is a fully federally-funded food benefit program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Department helps nearly one in seven residents throughout the Commonwealth meet their most basic needs.

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